

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

DATE: January 10, 2008

CALLED TO ORDER: 5:00 p.m.

ADJOURNED: 5:56 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Attending Members

Susie Day, Chair
Vernon Brown
Ginny Cain
Monroe Gray, Jr.
Janice McHenry
William Oliver
Mike Speedy

Absent Members

AGENDA

Overview Presentation on IndyParks and Recreation and Accreditation Process
- Joe Wynns, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

The Parks and Recreation Committee of the City-County Council met on Thursday, January 10, 2008. Chair Susie Day called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. with the following members present: Vernon Brown, Ginny Cain, Monroe Gray, Jr., Janice McHenry, and William Oliver. Mike Speedy arrived shortly thereafter.

Presentation on IndyParks and Recreation and Accreditation Process

Joseph Wynns, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), stated that DPR is looking forward to 2008. Mr. Wynns introduced staff members, (see attached organizational chart), and each division head spoke briefly regarding their division's duties.

Mr. Wynns stated that he has been with the Parks system for 30 years. He stated that he started as a summer playground leader and has rapidly moved up the ranks. He said that one of his best jobs was running Riverside Center, where there was more direct hands-on with the children.

Mr. Wynns stated that DPR has gone through the second Agency Accreditation, which is a National Accreditation for Parks and Recreation. He said that out of the 150 standards that needed to be met; DPR has fulfilled those requirements and is waiting on final word, which will come in March 2008. He said that being accredited ensures that DPR operates on a national standard and it opens doors for DPR to apply for grants. Mr. Wynns stated that DPR finished second for the Gold Medal Award for Excellence is also working with a Hispanic coordinator to increase participation.

Councillor Oliver thanked Mr. Wynns for a job well done over the last couple of years. He said that some of the parks are empty and not being utilized, two of which are in his district: Washington Park and Brookside Park. He asked what types of initiatives are being used to get better use out of the parks in 2008. Kristin Weaver, Public Information Officer with DPR, stated that the Fun Guide remains the chief method of communicating with the public. She said DPR works a lot with the Advisory Councils of the different parks to bring programming in and to promote community activities. Ms. Weaver stated that DPR is open to any new ideas and tries its best with what they have serving 192 parks. She said that DPR is designing new brochures for the department and will bring up-to-date a lot of activities that are offered. Mr. Wynns stated that there have been 1.5 million hits on the website. DPR does radio and paper advertisements, as well as spending \$80,000 per year producing the Fun Guides. He also stated that a couple of years ago, DPR built a \$2.5 million recreation center in Washington Park, and it is being used by everyone in the community. He said that there are many programs within all of the parks for the community to participate in.

{Clerk's Note: Councillor Speedy arrived at 5:20 p.m.}

Mr. Wynns discussed in detail some of DPR's 2008 initiatives, which are attached as Exhibit B. Some of those initiatives are:

- Advocacy – initiatives will result in policy making and funding that will benefit parks and recreation

- Knowledge – competency and skills that the parks staff needs to advocate, lead and serve their community
- Awareness – Communication among elected officials, partner organizations, media, and the general public to enhance healthy lifestyles and promote stewardship and community livability

Councillor Cain stated that there is an area south of Sargeant Road and Fall Creek Parkway that says it is the Peace Center. She asked if that center is in Lawrence or Indianapolis. Mr. Wynns stated that he believes that center is an expansion of the Peace Learning Center at Eagle Creek, and they have entered into a partnership with the City of Lawrence to open up the Learning Center. Councillor Cain also asked if the park near Skiles Test Elementary School will be synched with the Monon Trail. Don Colvin, Administrator, Resource Development, DPR, stated that the park is an extension of the trail, and anyone will be able to get onto the Monon Trail from that facility.

Councillor Speedy stated that he is looking forward to working with DPR. He said that he hopes there will be some progress in having some type of park system or land in Perry Township.

Councillor Oliver asked if Mr. Wynns could address Brookside Park. Mr. Wynns stated that at Brookside Park, there is a program that is not conducive for the facility. He said that the land is not there to develop a football field or build a decent complex. DPR has tried everything to convince the program director there to go over to Douglas Park where the facility is appropriate for the children to play. Mr. Wynns stated that the area in Brookside Park is unsafe, and if someone was to be injured, there will be no way for medical personnel to get to that person. Councillor Oliver asked if DPR has been in contact with the program director to establish other alternatives as to where they could go. Mr. Wynns stated that DPR has explained the situation to the pastor of the neighboring church and the league director. He said that the program director does not want to go over to Douglas Park where there are lights, bleachers, irrigation, and a score board. Councillor Oliver asked if the field in Brookside Park is not a certified field. Mr. Wynns answered in the affirmative.

Mr. Wynns asked the staff of DPR to give a brief overview of their background and duties for the committee.

Wayne Simpson, Chief Financial Officer, DPR, stated that he oversees the budget administration, revenue, payroll, and grants. He stated that he has worked for the city for 20 years and is a Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM).

Mr. Colvin stated that he has a degree in horticulture and forestry at the benefit of receiving his master's degree at Ball State University. He said that he interned here in the city with the Department of Metropolitan Development (DMD) as a park planner. He also said that he started his career in Indianapolis in 1990 as a senior park planner.

Ms. Weaver is the Chief Communications and Marketing Officer and has been with DPR since 2002. She stated that she is a graduate of DePauw University and has a master's in public relations.

Lou Hurre, Golf Administrator, started with the city in 1997. He stated that he has been involved with running golf courses since his college days at Tennessee. He stated that there are 13 golf facilities throughout the county. The First Tee Program is getting underway, as well as the Youth Golf Program.

Jennifer Voorhies, Administrator, Recreation and Leisure Service Division, stated that she has been with the city for 25 years. She started at DPR in 1982 and finished her master's degree in Sports Administration at Ohio State University. Ms. Voorhies is in charge of two divisions, Sports and Recreation. Activities range from aquatics, youth and adult sports, fitness, after-school programs, neighborhood parks, and senior citizen programs.

Councillor Gray wanted to point out that Ms. Voorhies was the coordinator for the National Convention that was held here and did an outstanding job.

Ron Banks, Administrator, Park Maintenance, stated that there are 104 employees working in park maintenance, with 88 of those being union personnel. He said that his division is divided between four sections; grounds (trash pick up, mold), facility maintenance (service swimming pools, painting, plumbing, and heating), land improvement (playground installation, building shelters), and natural resources (trees and planting). Mr. Banks has been with DPR for 37 years and graduated from Marian College with a bachelor's degree in history.

Keith Cheney, Administrator, is the Council Liaison for DPR. His other duties include public policy, grants, and fundraising. He stated that he has been with DPR for five years and graduated from Indiana University.

Jeff Ward, Administrator, Environmental Education, stated that his division is responsible for the land stewardship section, which goes out and provides restoration projects on the wetlands and woodlands.

Mr. Wynns introduced his executive assistant, Sandi Young. He said that she has been with him for 25 years and is his right hand. Mr. Wynns stated that Ms. Young is one of the best executive assistants in the system. Mr. Wynns stated that he has a talented staff and they have a passion for what they do. He said that his staff works real hard to make DPR a world class system.

With no further business pending, and upon motion duly made, the Parks and Recreation Committee of the City-County Council was adjourned at 5:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susie Day, Chair
Parks and Recreation Committee

SD/law